

RABBI ABRAHAM LAKS, ESQ.
[REDACTED]
NEW YORK, NEW YORK 10002
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September 14, 2018

The Honorable
Judge Jesse M. Furman
U.S. District Court
Federal Building and
United States Courthouse

Re: David Carlebach

Dear Judge,

I write on behalf of David Carlebach to request that the Court refrain from imprisoning him.

I am an attorney duly licensed in the State of New York and serve as the Rabbi of The Eldridge Street Synagogue located at 12 Eldridge Street since the year 2010. In addition, I teach at the West Side Kollel located on Manhattan's Upper West Side. The Kollel is a community-based, post-graduate level program, whose goal is to provide the local Jewish community with a team of teachers, tutors and scholars-in-residence to enhance their understanding and appreciation of Talmudic Law.

In my capacity as the Rabbi of the Eldridge Street Synagogue, I was privileged to meet David. David has attended services at the Eldridge Street Synagogue since the year 2016 and in that time I have gotten to know David Carlebach and have witnessed his kindness and desire to help anyone in need without seeking any compensation for his valuable time and effort as well as his dedication to our parishioners.

David is a very smart, kind and considerate person who does his utmost to help our Synagogue. Upon his first visit to our Synagogue, David, remarkably, offered to lead the services and over time succeeded in inspiring various parishioners. He has helped us progress both academically and socially. He actively participated in our discussions of the daily Torah portions. His understanding and insight into the religious and moral teachings of the portions are indicative of his true moral character and of his true remorse for the acts that bring him before the court.

Initially, during his first few months with us, I noticed David's altruistic motivation to truly help the community as a whole as well as any individuals he comes across. For example, he spent a lot of time befriending an elderly childless man who had recently suffered the loss of his spouse and was left without any other immediate family. David

provided comfort to this man who is alone in this world. In David, he found a unique combination of intelligence, humility and kindness. In fact, last week the man was hospitalized at Beekman on The Jewish Holiday of Rosh Hashanah when Jewish people are prohibited from driving a car. David walked a very far distance on an extremely hot day to visit that man and took the time and interest to get a report from his doctor and nurses.

Our Synagogue is remotely situated in the heart of Chinatown. Although we appreciate the beauty and culture of our neighborhood, there are very few people we can call upon to assist us in assembling a quorum in order to conduct services. Originally, the Jewish community of the Lower East Side had extended well into our neighborhood. Unfortunately, with the passage of time, the Jewish community's population shifted towards the suburban tri state New York area. Whatever parts of the Jewish community of The Lower East Side that remained became concentrated in the more eastern area of the Lower East Side. Notwithstanding these challenges, we continue to make the effort to hold regular services because there are still a few parishioners that are reluctant to abandon their beloved community. At the same time, we take pride in maintaining both the beauty and sanctity of one of the oldest Pre-World War I synagogues in the United States.

In this context, David's dedication has been so meaningful to us. One of the parishioners commented how "David was a dream come true" for our congregation by bringing joy and beautiful songs to the Synagogue.

As Your Honor may be aware, Sabbath day observant Jews aren't permitted to travel by car, train or bus on Saturdays. After a long week of, one can hardly expect anyone to walk a mile and half in the summer heat or on freezing cold wintery days. However, David never has to be called upon to make the trip. He simply shows up. On more than one occasion, after a long morning in the Synagogue, David would often be invited for lunch in various beautiful homes. Generally, David would turn down all those offers because he wanted to help one of our former parishioners who was hospitalized and needed assistance during those times. I approached David and insisted that he not deprive himself from eating lunch. David answered that the individual was desperately awaiting his arrival. I then tried to persuade David by reminding him that for someone his age it was hazardous to his health to continuously skip meals. David responded that his primary concern is not for his personal health but rather his concern is to make amends for his mistakes by performing as many acts of kindness as possible.

As of the time David was incarcerated on Rikers Island, our parishioners went through a trying period as we had become accustomed to relying on David's kindness and talent. Some of our parishioners made it a point of visiting David. The willingness of our parishioners to go through the difficulty, time consuming and traumatic experience of visiting David on Rikers Island a number of times in itself attests to how meaningful David's dedication is to our Synagogue.

I am aware that David has pled guilty to certain crimes. Despite his admitted wrongdoing, I still have the utmost respect for how dedicated he remains to our parishioners as well as all those individuals he continues to help, in what must be the most challenging period in his life. David has tearfully expressed to me his sincere regret for his conduct. I ask Your Honor to please consider that taking David away from his family and community would be detrimental to all those of us who have come to rely on his kindness.

I implore Your Honor to allow David to continue to assist all those many unfortunate people who depend on his kindness.

Respectfully,

A handwritten signature in dark ink, appearing to be 'A Laks', with a long horizontal flourish extending to the right.

Abraham Laks